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May 2022

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Hello everyone

I hope you are all enjoying the brighter weather as we welcome spring. As some of you will know, I recently joined The Fostering Network as director for Scotland, as well as director for Practice (UK). I look forward to contributing to the amazing work you all do to support children and young people and very much look forward to meeting and working with you in the months ahead.

With Foster Care Fortnight fast approaching, it will run from 9 until 22 May this year, we have a lot going on in Scotland. This year's theme is Fostering Communities – do take a look on page 9 to see some of the fantastic events we have lined up during the campaign. If you follow us on Twitter (and if you don't, please do: [@atfn_scot](https://twitter.com/atfn_scot)), you will be aware of our celebration of Care Day on 18 February 2022, and our cover photo for this edition shows Bethany Shelton, our Moving On project worker, who also shares her

reflections of the day on page 5.

With restrictions easing, I am pleased to say we have been able to organise some events and meetings face to face, though the success of our Zoom training and events will continue, enabling us to bring together the fostering community across Scotland. We will also be saying a fond farewell to our Young Advocates project which has made significant inroads in reducing the stigma children and young people with care experience often face. Our young advocates have worked with us to produce some fantastic resources – in particular our online learning resource for educators, which is available through Children in Scotland's learning hub (see page 5). We will be keeping in touch with some of our inspirational young advocates through our new young person's advisory group – we were delighted to prove successful in securing funding from The Promise to set this up. To find out more about our



Young Advocates project take a look at page 4, and for more information on The Promise and our work in support of it, turn to page 3.

Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like more information on anything from this newsletter, or our work in general. I look forward to working with you to develop our work here in Scotland to improve the lives of all children and young people in foster care.

Jacqueline Cassidy
Director of Scotland and Practice

Moving On update and Learning to Look After You – a well-being event for foster carers

Moving On supports positive transitions through and out of foster care for young people in care and families who foster. Since launching in July 2021, our project worker, Bethany, has engaged with foster families, social workers and other organisations to establish the most pressing needs during times of transition, and use our findings to inform the creation of a best practice resource. We're looking to build on the 7 Principles for Good Transitions developed by The Scottish Transitions Forum, exploring how they may inform practice for transitions specific to fostering. If you would like to get involved, or share your experiences, please email Bethany at scotland@fostering.net.

Transitions can be associated with increased feelings of stress, anxiety, loss, grief and shame. As a starting point in supporting foster carers, we wanted to provide a space developed for foster carers with foster carers. When identifying what this space should provide, one carer shared that she hoped to learn 'what to do on the days where you want to scream.' With this and other feedback in mind, we planned a launch event to explore emotional well-being and provide ongoing spaces for informal, peer support as well as additional, professional support.

The launch event, Learning to Look After You: a well-being

event for foster carers, was held on 20 April 2022 at the National Piping Centre in Glasgow, as well as online. Although at the time of going to print this event had not yet taken place, we planned for the day to explore three broad and overlapping themes:

- Self-care strategies: what it means and looks like to **support yourself** through the busyness and demands of everyday fostering;
- **supporting and being supported by others**, sharing advice and experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and normalising conversations about the difficult aspects of fostering and transitions;
- what **support from professionals** looks like and when this might be beneficial for you and your family.

The event provided a supportive environment which included rich learning from counselling professionals and the opportunity to support one another with the vitally important work of being foster carers.

To find out more about the Learning to Look After You well-being event, access the resources or find out what follow on support is available through our Moving On project, email Bethany at scotland@fostering.net.

Update from Fiona Duncan, chair of The Promise Scotland

Although I am writing this at my kitchen table in March, it won't be published until May. I hope that's not too late to publicly welcome Jacqueline Cassidy to her new role leading The Fostering Network's Scotland team, and offer my thanks for her ongoing commitment to **#KeepThePromise**.

The warmth from today's sunshine is a lovely reminder that spring has most definitely sprung. Despite the storms and wintry showers of February, there are signs of new life everywhere with daffodils and crocuses starting to peak through the ground.

This is mirrored in Scotland's work to **#KeepThePromise**; with opportunities – and challenges – on the immediate horizon and beyond. Recent recruitment by The Promise Scotland has created its own new beginnings, bringing enthusiastic new folk into the team, keen to do what they can to support the changes Scotland needs to make.

The end of last year saw the Scottish Government's consultation on the National Care Service close. With a focus on a single question – will it **#KeepThePromise?** – The Promise Scotland concluded that there was no evidence as to whether the proposal to include children and families would or



would not do that. In February, government published its analysis of the responses it received. In March – certainly by the time this newsletter is published – they will have made their decision.

Either way, there is still so much to be done. This will need renewed energy and the continued, steady focus of everyone involved in the work of change.

Some may remember February 2020 when the Independent Care Review concluded and secured cross-party support. Since then, the government's commitment to **#KeepThePromise** has been unwavering. And by now, it will have

published its plan. Spring is a time for hope – let's hope this plan contains real, tangible actions that will help support Scotland to realise the systemic changes the care review demanded.

The Promise Oversight Board is also working on its first report, likely to have been published or be imminent as you read this. The board will report annually until 2030 – or the promise is kept – whichever is soonest. Its reports will update Scotland on the progress being made and make an honest assessment of what and how well the work of change is progressing. At times this may mean dealing with difficult and uncomfortable truths.

Change can only be delivered by collective, dedicated endeavour. Calling out and challenging inadequacies whenever they are identified must form part of Scotland's unshakeable approach to deliver change.

Finally, after a year of existing as a virtual organisation, hopefully The Promise Scotland will soon have its own office. While technology and the use of shared workspaces has mitigated some of the challenges of homeworking, the team is looking forward to inviting partners to connect more closely on what needs done to **#KeepThePromise**.

So, let's look forward to working together to make sure that all of Scotland's children grow up loved, safe, and respected, and able to realise their full potential.

Our work to #KeepThePromise

It's been an exciting start to 2022 for our Promise implementation work. We secured further funding from The Promise Partnership to support our aspiration of establishing a young person's advisory group. The group will advise on our work to

#KeepThePromise at The Fostering Network and be supported to identify their own project or campaign in the coming year. Recruitment will begin soon so watch this space and if you know of any young adults (aged 18-26) who might be interested, tell them to keep an eye on our Twitter account, **@tfn_scot**, for updates!

We have also made a few steps

forward with setting up a working group to begin a review of our organisational language. Language is complex and powerful and different words mean different things for different people. Our aim is to ensure we are not using language that compounds the stigma of care and our framing of care doesn't exacerbate the feeling children and young people have reported of being 'different' to their peers. If you have insight, thoughts or views you would like to share regarding this work, get in touch with our implementation manager, Laura Graham, by emailing **scotland@fostering.net**.

Planning is underway for two workshops that will take place during Foster Care Fortnight aimed at foster carers who would like to know more about The Promise. We'll take a look back at the journey from the Independent Care Review to where we are now, what The Promise means for foster carers and how you can be involved in our continued work to **#KeepThePromise**.

Check out the Foster Care Fortnight article for more information on dates and how to sign up.



Celebrating the Young Advocates project

The Young Advocates project is coming to an end after two and a half years of raising awareness and reducing stigma for young people with experience of care in education.

The young advocates, foster carers, educators, social workers and other professionals have shared their experiences which have had a positive impact and promoted positive change for the future.

We would like to thank the professionals involved in the steering group including CELCIS, Children's Health Scotland, Virtual School head

teachers, social workers, foster carers and young people. We are extremely grateful for their time, support and expertise which have contributed to the success of the project. Also, a big thank you to our funders Young Start Fund and Life Changes Trust. The Young Advocates project would not have been possible without their support.

However, the heart of the project has been with the young advocates who



have led the way with how they wanted voices to be heard and represented. They have created inspirational pieces of artwork, poetry and a music video as well as delivering sessions for a variety of professionals about their lived experiences. Their

messages will continue to have a positive impact on those they spoke with, and through the free resource, for years to come.

Finally, let's hear from some of our amazing young advocates. It has been a pleasure working with you all and seeing everything you have achieved. We are in the process of starting up a young person's advisory group and very much hope some of you would like to be involved. Either way, our door is always open to you and we look forward to hearing about your future successes.



'I've absolutely loved being part of the Young Advocates project. It has massively boosted my confidence, helped me to meet so many wonderful people but most of all it has helped me to 'own' my care experience status. If you had told me a few years ago that I would be speaking to teachers about how to better support care experienced young people in schools I never would have believed you, but here I am having helped share our stories with so many people. I am SO thankful to Amy for all the support and hard work she's put in.' - **Rebecca**



'It's been great to be a part of the Young Advocates project! I especially enjoyed the Through Care, After Care event held in Glasgow last October because it allowed us to showcase all the creative projects we have been working on as well as spreading even more awareness of care from a care experienced young person's point of view. I will take all the memories and strategies I have learned along with me as I start my uni adventure in Primary Education. Thank you to everyone involved!!!!' - **Abigale**



'The Young Advocates project has been great for my confidence and personal development. I have always been encouraged to get involved with projects and put myself out there. My time as a young advocate has involved multiple presentations to professionals, speaking at Scottish Parliament and many creative approaches.

'Being the biological daughter of a foster carer, I've often found it difficult to find a place that I belong but the young advocates provided me with a sense of belonging. It has given me a platform to share my experiences as part of a foster family.

'I'm really grateful for all of the opportunities I've had and hope that our work continues to be impactful in reducing the stigma surrounding being care experienced.' - **Caitlin**



The Young Advocates project

"A young child holding a balloon their hopes and aspirations for a home reflected within."

Digital art and word by Rosie Campbell, young advocate.

To see more creative work please visit thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/young-advocates.

An online resource: Supporting care experienced young people in education.

Cost: Free

Available: Children In Scotland's learning hub childreninscotland.clc.moodle.org.

Who: Staff within schools

Time: About 45 minutes to complete

If you would like to view or receive copies of the young advocates' creative postcards for yourself or to share with educational establishments, or for any other information about the project, please get in touch or visit our webpage thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/young-advocates.

Happy belated Care Day!

Care Day takes place every year and is a celebration of the rights of people with care experience. This year, **#CareDay22** took place on Friday 18 February and the lighthouses on the cover of this issue (alongside a photo of Bethany) were made as part of The Fostering Network's celebrations. They represent all the foster carers, staff members and wider workforce in our membership who act as lighthouses for all of our children, young people and their families. Those lighthouses support and protect others as they



Laura Graham, implementation manager for The Promise.

navigate the sometimes challenging waters of life, fostering, and the experience of care.

Bethany's reflections on Care Day

When our staff team were asked to think about how we could celebrate **#CareDay22**, my mind was buzzing. Through my role as the Moving On project worker and with parents who are foster carers there was so much I wanted to say on the day of the world's largest celebration of the rights of people with care experience. However, I realised what I really wanted to celebrate was my foster sister. I wanted to share a little of the complicated but beautiful and surprisingly natural transition through which a stranger became my sister. I wrote the poem opposite reflecting on just that - when my home became hers too.

The poem is a bit clunky to read, as it is deliberately without a strict structure or rhyming pattern. Instead, it finds its own way to exist, which I think is true of lots of our life stories and experiences.

Find out more about Care Day by searching **#CareDay22** in Google or social media. See what else we did to celebrate Care Day by following **@TFN_Scot** on Twitter.

Mi casa es tu casa

*I picked the back bedroom
When we moved to our house
To overlook the garden
I'd watch the dog run about
And see the seasons change*

*My carpet was always covered
in mess
But in the best way
It was my room and my mess
And I wanted nothing less.*

*When she moved to our house
She had the back bedroom
To overlook the garden
Watch her rabbits run about
I'd miss my mess, the window
and view
But the seasons have changed
inside the house too*

*She keeps the carpet covered
in mess
But in the best way
It was my room and now it's hers
And I want nothing less.*

Bethany Shelton

18 February, Care Day 2022

Fosterline Scotland update



Hello everyone, I hope this finds you and your loved ones well. Since the pandemic started, we have had to adapt our services and, to meet the increased demand for Fosterline Scotland, we continue to offer additional support. Our training and workshops are still being delivered online. The next benefits workshop we are hosting will be run on 25 May 2022. This will be delivered by a welfare rights worker from Child Poverty Action Group in Scotland. Please email scotland@fostering.net to register your interest in attending. We will be running more tax workshops later in the year.

If you need support completing your tax return, please get in touch with us. In addition to telephone support, we continue to provide

personal video calls by appointment for anyone who would like one. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you feel this would be beneficial for you. However, as restrictions continue to ease we are now in a position to meet face to face in our office in Glasgow. Additionally, if you feel you need independent support at a meeting or panel please get in touch and we will try our best to support you.

Remember Fosterline Scotland is here to assist with any query. The service is open from Monday to Friday 10am until 4pm, and evening hours by appointment. To book a phone call or virtual appointment, please contact us by phone or email. We also have a legal helpline and a stress support service to help you. If you need legal advice, please contact our 24-hour legal helpline on **01384 885 734**. You can also access our stress support service and speak with a trained counsellor, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on **01384 889 549**. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have a query you would like some help with.

**Thanks,
Mirren and Julie**



Free benefits online workshop for foster carers in May 2022

Come along and get expert advice from a CPAG welfare rights worker

Wednesday 25 May 2022

Time: 10am – 1pm, Zoom

- Are you a foster carer member of The Fostering Network?
- Would you like to find out more about what benefits you can claim as a foster carer, how to apply and what the conditions are under certain benefits including Universal Credit?

If yes, then why not come along to our free workshop in May.

To find out more or to book a place, please contact Mirren

or Julie, by emailing scotland@fostering.net, or telephoning **0141 204 1400**.

Training update – courses now online!

'Diane and Julie were excellent and very knowledgeable. They were really clear and concise regarding the expectations of the training and I now feel a lot more confident, despite initial reservations.'

Our training programme is now running successfully online. Courses are regularly updated on our website, so do keep an eye on it for the latest information: thefosteringnetwork.org.uk/events.

Upcoming Zoom courses include:

The Skills to Foster™: Train the Trainers

Tuesday 7 June, Wednesday 8 June and Friday 10 June 2022

£474 plus VAT for members and £948 plus VAT for non-members

This course enables participants to increase knowledge and confidence in the virtual delivery of The Skills to Foster pre approval training course.

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker

Wednesday 15 June 2022

£122.40 plus VAT for members and £244 plus VAT for non-members

This one day training course enables participants to reflect on supervision and their role as a supervising social

worker. This training course is open to participants from across the UK.

These and other courses are also available to be purchased by fostering services as 'in-house' training. Other courses include: Managing Allegations Against Foster Carers, Moving Into Adulthood, and Men who Foster.

To book a place on one of our courses please visit our website, or for more information please contact Joy Crawford on **0141 204 1400**, email scotland@fostering.net

Foster Care Fortnight #FCF22:

Fostering Communities, 9 – 22 May 2022

Foster Care Fortnight is The Fostering Network's annual campaign to raise the profile of fostering and celebrate the contribution you all make. Our theme for this year is 'Fostering Communities.' During the two weeks we will be hosting a number of events, as outlined below:

The Promise and You

Tuesday 10 May
10.30am until 11.30am, Zoom

Led by Barnardo's, Dundee City Council and Laura Graham, implementation manager.

An event for foster carers to learn more about The Promise and what part you play in keeping The Promise.

The Impact of Loss and Change (includes, but not exclusively, bereavement)

Wednesday 11 May
10am until 2pm, Zoom

Led by Children's Health Scotland and our Moving On project.

Loss and change are parts of all our lives and we learn to deal with these as we go through life. But how are these two different for children and young people in foster care, whose lives may have been subject to much change? How might this impact on their sense of emotional well-being and how can foster carers best support the child, themselves, and their families to manage the feelings which flow from change and loss?

Round Table event for local authorities

Thursday 12 May
11am until 12.30pm, Zoom

Led by Jacqueline Cassidy, director for Scotland, and Sara Smith, head of operations.

Discussion and deep dive into thematic report in status of foster carers and foster carer charters. Suitable for all local authorities in Scotland.

Celebration event for foster families

Saturday 14 May
11am until 3pm, Dynamic Earth

An all day event celebrating fostering communities and our work in Scotland including our Young Advocates and Moving On projects and our work with The Promise. An informal, fun day with crafts and activities as well as a trip around Dynamic Earth. Open to any foster family in membership (tickets limited).

The Promise and You

Tuesday 17 May
10.30am until 11.30am, Zoom

Led by Barnardo's, Dundee City Council and Laura Graham, implementation manager.

An event for foster carers to learn more about The Promise and what part you play in keeping The Promise.

Children's rights in education and advocating for children in an education setting

Wednesday 18 May
10am until 2pm, Zoom

Led by Enquire and Julie Reid, Fosterline Scotland worker

Round Table event for Independent and Voluntary Providers forum members

Wednesday 18 May
2pm until 3.30pm, Zoom

Led by Jacqueline Cassidy, director for Scotland, and Sara Smith, head of operations.

Discussion and deep dive into thematic report on the status of foster carers and foster carer charters. Suitable for all IVP services in membership in Scotland.

If you would like to attend any of these events, please email us, specifying the event you are interested in, at scotland@fostering.net.

Blue Light Card: Foster carer eligibility

Blue Light Cards provide discounts online as well as for in-store purchases from key leading national retailers. We are pleased to let you know that, thanks to the efforts of a foster carer from Hertfordshire, foster carers are now eligible to have a Blue Light Card. This means foster carers can now register and receive 15,000

discounts from large national retailers to local businesses across categories such as holidays, cars, days out, fashion, gifts, insurance, phones and more.

For more information, or to register for your card, please visit bluelightcard.co.uk/index.php.



Thank you and goodbye!

The Life Changes Trust closed its doors at the end of March this year. They had reached the end of their endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund, and after investing £50million to drive transformational change for individuals living with dementia and those who care for them, and the lives of young people who experience care, it is time to say goodbye to the fantastic team at the Trust.

We would like to say a massive **thank you** to them for everything they have done to empower young people, elevate the voice of lived experience and support a number of projects to influence and create positive change for those who experience care. The Life Changes Trust also provided funding for The Fostering Network's Young Advocates project which aims to create learning opportunities for teachers and educators to help raise awareness and reduce the stigma of care in educational settings.

You can find out more about the work of the Life Changes Trust and the impact and learning from their funded projects on their website lifechangestrust.org.uk.



Follow us on Twitter



Thank you to everyone who has followed our Twitter account since our launch in November last year. To date, we have 259 followers and counting! Head over to our account **@tfn_scot** and click 'follow' to make sure you never miss out on updates from our projects in Scotland, reminders for training and events and news from The Fostering Network across the UK. We'll see you there!

Dates for your diary...

Tuesday 10 May 2022

The Impact of Loss and Change
Zoom (page 7)

Wednesday 11 May 2022

The Promise and You
Zoom (page 7)

Thursday 12 May 2022

Round Table event for local authorities
Zoom (page 7)

Saturday 14 May 2022

Celebration event for foster families
Dynamic Earth (page 7)

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The Promise and You
Zoom (page 7)

Wednesday 18 May 2022

Children's rights in education and advocating for children in an education setting
Zoom (page 7)

Wednesday 18 May 2022

Round Table event for Independent and Voluntary Providers forum members
Zoom (page 7)

Wednesday 25 May 2022

Benefits workshop for foster carers
Zoom (page 6)

Tuesday 7, Wednesday 8 and Friday 10 June 2022

The Skills to Foster: Train the Trainers
Zoom (page 6)

Wednesday 15 June 2022

The Role of the Supervising Social Worker
Zoom (page 6)

If you would like more information on any of the above, please contact us on **0141 204 1400** or **scotland@fostering.net**.



With thanks to the funders who supported this edition.

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